

KITTITAS COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH
VIDEO UPDATE
Monday, July 12, 2021

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Today's video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dzTWzJgWtrU>

KCPHD channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCyQzBwJLbkLj7WueKJ5w7mQ/>

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Good morning, it's Dr. Larson talking about COVID-19. I'll talk about a few things: Schools, what's happening at Central Washington University, and about how your vaccination is waiting for you at your physician's office. We'll also talk about what is happening with our numbers in Kittitas County.

I will start by talking about a study that the UW is doing, called "The WAVES Study" (a Washington Coronavirus Exposure Survey). This study looks at who might have had COVID-19 in the last year and a half and didn't really know. You could be getting a letter asking you to be part of the study. Please participate. There is no cost to you -- they will do some blood samples and nasal swabbing to see if you might have had COVID-19.

They want to look at what might be happening in the community in regard to COVID-19. It would be good to know what percentage of our population might have had COVID-19. Is it 10% or 25%? The answer makes a big difference, so please participate in the University of Washington's WAVES Study if you get something in the mail so we can figure this out going forward.

Now I will talk about the numbers in Kittitas County. They are really quite good. Our incident rate (case rate per 100,000 for 14 days) is 51.9, which is higher than what we'd like but way better than where we've been in the past. Our percent positive is 1.9%, and we want to be less than 5%, so that's looking good.

Walla Walla is having a significant problem currently, and we are not sure why. Their incident rate is 318.8 per 100,000 for 14 days, and their percent positive is 1.3% (this means they're not testing enough -- there are probably more people out there who are sick).

And it's not because we're better than them in regard to the vaccination rate. They are currently at 56.5% of people 12 years and older who are fully vaccinated, whereas in Kittitas County,

we are at 47.4%. The state's rate is 59.5%. It could be because of the Delta variant, it could be that last year they did a better job staying at home than we did, so they didn't get exposed to COVID-19 much at that time, but are being exposed more now.

We are doing a lot of sequencing of samples down in Walla Walla County. We are seeing similar problems in southwest Missouri where almost all the samples are the Delta variant and their hospital system is overwhelmed. Every person that has been hospitalized in Kittitas County has been unvaccinated. We are also seeing that in Walla Walla and Missouri.

There's definitely an advantage to being vaccinated. If you got COVID-19 last year, you are *not* protected for the Delta variant. Please consider getting vaccinated. Again, your physicians are your trusted sources and your vaccine is waiting for you. Please give them a a call to get vaccinated.

As for the schools, the CDC has come out with guidance saying that vaccinated staff and students do not have to wear a mask in school next year. That is a big change. We don't know what we'll be doing in Washington state yet; I'm on a task force with the governor's office. We have three meetings this week and hope to have some guidance for Washington schools later this week or early next week.

In California, they are going to require masks in schools going forward because they don't want people being treated differently. There are a lot of problems with trying to figure out who is and who isn't vaccinated, but the CDC has said that it's safe to have people who are vaccinated not wearing masks.

Central Washington University has a new president, and they're moving forward with their plan to be a fully vaccinated campus. That means everyone at CWU (students, faculty, and staff) need to be vaccinated or have a waiver that says they're choosing not to be vaccinated on file. There's a lot of work going on there and that will be helpful for us a community come fall.

Enjoy your time out. Please be careful. If you're unvaccinated, you are at risk of ending up at the hospital, at risk of giving COVID-19 to others, and at risk of helping us to develop more resistant variants. Please consider being vaccinated, enjoy the summer.

Make sure you're being careful in the heat. We didn't have any

deaths in Kittitas County due to heat, but we did have a lot of deaths in Washington state Due to the recent heat event.

Be careful and take care. Thanks.

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Transcription provided by:
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